SCIENCE

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THE IMMEDIATE WORK IN CHEMICAL SCIENCE.[1]

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A DIVISION of science has a work of its own to do, a work that well might be done for its own sake, and still more must be done in payment of what is due to the other divisions. Each section of our association has its just task, and fidelity to this is an obligation to all the sections. Those engaged in any labor of science owe a debt to the world at large, and can be called to give an account of what they are doing, and what they have to do, that the truth may be shown on all sides.

If it be in my power to make the annual address of this meeting of any service at all to you who hear it — in your loyalty to the association — I would bring before you some account of the work that is wanted in the science of chemistry. Of what the chemists have done in the past the arts of industry speak more plainly than the words of any address. Of what chemists may do in the future it would be quite in vain that I should venture to predict. But of the nature of the work that is waiting in the chemical world at the present time I desire to say what I can, and I desire to speak in the interests of science in general. The interests of science, I am well assured, cannot be held indifferent to the interests of the public at large.

The Hidden Composition of Matter.

It is not a small task to find out how the matter of the universe is made. The task is hard, not because of the great quantity in which matter exists, nor by reason of the multiplicity of the kinds and compounds of matter, but rather from the obscurity under which the actual composition of matter is hidden from man. The physicists reach a conclusion that matter is an array of molecules, little things, not so large as a millionth of a millimeter in size, and the formation of these they leave to the work of the chemists. The smallest objects dealt with in science, their most distinct activities become known only by the widest exercise of inductive reason.

The New World of Discovery.

The realm of chemical action, the world within the molecules of matter, the abode of the chemical atoms, is indeed a new world and but little known. The speculative atoms of the ancients, mere mechanical divisions, prefiguring the molecules of modern science, yet gave no sign of the chemical atoms of this century, nor any account of what happens in a chemical change. A new field of knowledge was opened in 1774 by the discovery of oxygen, and entered upon in 1804 by the publications of Dalton, a region more remote and more difficult of access than was the unknown continent toward which Christopher Columbus set his sails three centuries earlier. The world within molecules has been open for only a hundred years. The sixteenth century was not long enough for an exploration of the continent of America, and the nineteenth has not been long enough for the undertaking of the chemists. When four centuries of search shall have been made in the world of chemical formation, then science should be ready to meet a congress of nations, to rejoice with the chemist upon the issue of his task.

It is well known that chemical labor has not been barren of returns. The products of chemical action, numbering thousands of thousands, have been sifted and measured and weighed. If you ask what happens in a common chemical change you can obtain direct answers. When coal burns in the air, how much oxygen is used up can be stated with a degree of exactness true to the first decimal of mass, perhaps to the second, yet questionable in the third. How much carbonic acid is made can be told in weight and in volume with approaching exactness. How much heat this chemical action is worth, how much light, how much electromotive force, what train-load of cars it can carry, how long it can make certain wheels go round,— for these questions chemists and physicists are ready. With how many metals carbonic acid will unite, how many ethers it can make into carbonates, into what classes of molecules a certain larger fragment of carbonic acid can be formed,—the incomplete records of these things already run through a great many volumes. These carboxylic bodies are open to productive studies, stimulated by various sorts of inquiry and demands of life. Such have been the gatherings of research. They have been slowly drawn into order, more slowly interpreted in meaning. The advance has been constant, deliberate, sometimes in doubt, always persisting and gradually gaining firmer ground. So chemistry has reached the period of definition. Its guiding theory has come to be realized.

The Central Truth of this Science.

"The atomic theory" has more and more plainly appeared to be the central and vital truth of chemical science. As a working hypothesis it has directed abstruse research through difficult ways to open accomplishment in vivid reality. As a system of knowledge, it has more than kept pace with the rate of invention. As a pholosophy, it is in touch with profound truth in physics, in the mineral kingdom, and in the functions of living bodies. As a language, it has been a necessity of man in dealing with chemical events. Something might have been done, no doubt, without it, had it been possible to keep it out of the chemical mind. But with a knowledge of the primary elements of matter, as held at the beginning of this century, some theory of chemical atoms was inevitable. And whatever theory might have been adopted, its use in investigation would have drawn it with a certainty into the essential features of the theory now established. It states the constitution of matter in terms that stand for things as they are made. The mathematician may choose the ratio of numerical notation, whether the ratio of ten or some other. But the chemist must find existing ratios of atomic and molecular mass, with such degree of exactness as he can attain. Chemical notation, the index of the atomic system, is imperfect, as science is incomplete. However defective, it is the resultant of a multitude of facts. The atomic theory has come to be more than facile language, more than lucid classification, more than working hypothesis, it is the definition of the known truth in the existence of matter.

The chemical atom is known, however, for what it does, rather than for what it is. It is known as a centre of action, a factor of influence, an agent of power. It is identified by its responses, and measured by its energies. Concealed as it is, each atom has given proof of its own part in the structure of a molecule. Proofs of position, not in space but in action, as related to other atoms, have been obtained by a multitude of workers with the greatest advantage. The arrangement of the atoms in space, however, is another and later question, not involved in the general studies of structure. But even this question has arisen upon its own chemical evidences for certain bodies, so that "the configuration" of the molecule has become an object of active research.

Known for what it does, the atom is not clearly known for what it is. Chemists, at any rate, are concerned mainly with what can be made out of atoms, not with what atoms can be made of. Whatever they are, and by whatever force of motion it is that they unite with each other, we define them by their effects. Through their effects they are classified in the rank and file of the periodic

[1] Address of the retiring president of the American Association at Rochester, August, 1892.

system. The physicists, however, do not stop short of the philosophical study of the atom itself. As a vibratory body its movements have been under mathematical calculations; as a vortex ring its pulsations have been assumed to agree with its combining power. As an operating magnet its interaction with other like magnets has been predicated as the method of valence. There are, as I am directly assured, physicists of penetration and prudence now looking with confidence to studies of the magnetic relations of atoms to each other.[1] Moreover, another company of workers, the chemists of geometric isomerism, assume a configuration of the atoms, in accord with that of the molecule.

Hypotheses to be Held Apart.

The stimulating truth of the atomic constitution of the molecule, a great truth in elastic touch with all science, excites numerous hypotheses, which, however profitable they may be, are to be stoutly held at a distance from the truth itself. Such are the hypotheses of molecular aggregation into crystals and other mineral forms. Such are the biological theories of molecules polymerizing into cells, and of vitality as a chemical property of the molecule. Such are the questions of the nature of atoms, and the genesis of the elements as they are now known,— questions on the border of metaphysics. Let all these be held distinct from the primary law of the atomic constitution of simple molecules in gaseous bodies, an essential principle in an exact science. The chemist should have the comfortable assurance, every day, as he plies his balance of precision, that the atom-made molecules are there, in their several ratios of quantity, however many unsettled questions may lie around about them. Knowledge of molecular structure makes chemistry a science, nourishing to the reason, giving dominion over matter, for beneficence to life.

Men Who Make Science.

Every chemical pursuit receives strength from every advance in the knowledge of the molecule. And to this knowledge, none the less, every chemical pursuit contributes. The analysis of a mineral, whether done for economic ends or not, may furnish a distinct contribution toward atomic valence. The further examination of steel in the cables of a suspension bridge is liable to lead to unexpected evidence upon polymeric unions. Rothamsted Farm, where ten years is not a long time for the holding of an experiment, yields to us a classic history of the behavior of nitrogen, a history from which we correct our theories. The analysis of butter for its substitutes has done something to set us right upon the structure of the glycerides. Clinical inspection of the functions of the living body fain finds a record of molecular transformations too difficult for the laboratory. The efforts of pharmaceutical manufacture stimulate new orders of chemical combination. The revision of the pharmacopœia every ten years points out a humiliating number of scattered errors in the published constants on which science depends. The duty of the engineer, in his scrutiny of the quality of lubricating oils, brings a more critical inquiry into the laws of molecular movement. There is not time to mention the many professions and pursuits of men who contribute toward the principles of chemistry and hold a share therein. If it be the part of pure science to find the law of action in nature, it is the part of applied science both to contribute facts and to put theory to the larger proof. In the words of one who has placed industry in the greatest of its debts to philosophic research, W. H. Perkin, "There is no chasm between pure and applied science, they do not even stand side by side, but are linked together." So in all branches of chemistry, whether it be termed applied or not, the best workers are the most strongly bound as one, in their dependance upon what is known of the structure of the molecule.

Waiting for Workers.

Studies of structure were never before so inviting. In this direction, and in that, especial opportunities appear. Moreover, the actual worker here and there breaks into unexpected paths of promise. Certainly the sugar group is presenting to the chemist an open way from simple alcohols on through to the cell substances of the vegetable world. And nothing anywhere could be more suggestive than the extremely simple unions of nitrogen lately discovered. They are likely to elucidate linkings of this element in great classes of carbon compounds, all significant in general chemistry. Then certain comparative studies have new attractions. As halogens have been upon trial side by side with each other, so, for instance, silicon must be put through its paces with carbon, and phosphorus with nitrogen. Presently, also, the limits of molecular mass, in polymers and in unions with water, are to be nearer approached from the chemical side, as well as from the side of physics, in that attractive but perplexing borderground between affinity and the states of aggregation.

And all for Mankind.

Such is the extent and such the diversity of chemical labor at present that every man must put limits to the range of his study. The members of a society or section of chemistry, coming together to hear each other's researches, are better able, for the most part, to listen for instruction than for criticism. Still less prepared for hasty judgment are those who do not come together in societies at all. Even men of eminent learning must omit large parts of the subject, if it be permitted to speak of chemistry as a single subject. These considerations admonish us to be liberal. When metallurgical chemistry cultivates skepticism as to the work upon atomic closed chains, it is a culture not the most liberal. When a devotee of organic synthesis puts a low value upon analytic work, he takes a very narrow view of chemical studies. When the chemist who is in educational service disparages investigations done in industrial service, he exercises a pitiful brevity of wisdom.

The pride of pure science is justified in this, that its truth is for the nurture of man. And the ambition of industrial art is honored in this, its skill gives strength to man. It is the obligation of science to bring the resources of the earth, its vegetation and its animal life, into the full service of man, making the knowledge of creation a rich portion of his inheritance, in mind and estate, in reason and in conduct, for life present and life to come. To know creation is to be taught of God.

The Means of Unification.

I have spoken of the century of beginning chemical labor, and have referred to the divisions and specialties of chemical study. What can I say of the means of uniting the earlier and later years of the past, as well as the separated pursuits of the present, in one mobile working force? Societies of science are among these means, and it becomes us to magnify their office. For them, however, all that we can do is worth more than all we can say. And there are other means, even more effective than associations. Most necessary of all the means of unification in science is the use of its literature.

It is by published communications that the worker is enabled to begin, not where the first investigation began, but where the last one left off. The enthusiast who lacks the patience to consult books, presuming to start anew all by himself in science, has need to get on faster than Antoine L. Lavoisier did when he began, an associate of the French Academy in 1768. He of immortal memory, after fifteen eventful years of momentous labor, reached only such a combustion of hydrogen as makes a very simple class-experiment at present. But, however early in chemical discovery, Lavoisier availed himself of contemporaries. They found oxygen, he learned oxidation: one great man was not enough, in 1774, both to reveal this element and show what part it takes in the formation of matter. The honor of Lavoisier is by no means the less that he used the results of others, it might have been the more had he given their results a more explicit mention. Men of the largest original power make the most of the results of other men. Discoverers do not neglect previous achievement, however it may appear in biography. The masters of science are under the limitations of their age. Had Joseph Priestley lived in the seventeenth century he had not discovered oxygen. Had August Kekulé worked in the period of Berzelius, some other

[1] "The results of molecular physics point unmistakably to the atom as a magnet, in its chemical activities."— A. E. Dolbear, in a personal communication.

man would have set forth the closed chain of carbon combination, and Kekulé, we may be sure, would have done something else to clarify chemistry. Such being the limitations of the masters, what contributions can be expected in this age from a worker who is without the literature of his subject?

The Cure for the Crank.

In many a town some solitary thinker is toiling intensely over some self-imposed problem, devoting to it such sincerity and strength as should be of real service, while still he obtains no recognition. Working without books, unaware of memoirs on the theme he loves, he tries the task of many with the strength of one. Such as he sometimes send communications to this association. An earnest worker, his utter isolation is quite enough to convert him into a crank. To every solitary investigator I should desire to say, get to a library of your subject, learn how to use its literature, and possess yourself of what there is on the theme of your choice, or else determine to give it up altogether. You may get on very well without college laboratories, you can survive it if unable to reach the meetings of men of learning, you can do without the counsel of an authority, but you can hardly be a contributor in science except you gain the use of its literature.

The Want of Original Memoirs.

First in importance to the investigator are the original memoirs of previous investigators. The chemical determinations of the century have been reported by their authors in the periodicals. The serials of the years, the continuous living repositories of all chemistry, at once the oldest and the latest of its publications, these must be accessible to the worker who would add to this science. A library for research is voluminous, and portions of it are said to be scarce, nevertheless it ought to be largely supplied. The laboratory itself is not more important than the library of science. In the public libraries of our cities, in all colleges now being established, the original literature of science ought to be planted. It is a wholesome literature, at once a stimulant and a corrective of that impulse to discovery that is frequent among the people of this country. That a good deal of it is in foreign languages is hardly a disadvantage; there ought to be some exercise for the modern tongues that even the public high schools are teaching. That the sets of standard journals are getting out of print is a somewhat infirm objection. They have no right to be out of print in these days when they give us twenty pages of blanket newspaper at breakfast, and offer us Scott's novels in full for less than the cost of a day's entertainment. As for the limited editions of the old sets, until reproduced by new types, they may be multiplied through photographic methods. When there is a due demand for the original literature of chemistry, a demand in accord with the prospective need for its use, the supply will come, let us believe, more nearly within the means of those who require it than it now does.

The Indexing of the Literature.

What I have said of the literature of one science can be said, in the main, of the literature of other sciences. And other things ought to be said of what is wanted to make the literature of science more accessible to consulting readers. A great deal of indexing is wanted. Systematic bibliography, both of previous and of current literature, would add a third to the productive power of a large number of workers. It would promote common acquaintance with the original communications of research, and a general demand for the serial sets. Topical bibliographies are of great service. In this regard I desire to ask attention to the annual reports, in this association for nine years past, of the committee on Indexing Chemical Literature, as well as to recent systematic undertakings in geology, and like movements in zoology and other sciences, also to the Index Medicus, as a continuous bibliography of current professional literature.

Societies and institutions of science may well act as patrons to the bibliography of research, the importance of which has been recognized by the fathers of this association. In 1855, Joseph Henry, then a past-president of this body, memorialized the British association for co-operation in bibliography, offering that aid of the Smithsonian Institution which has so often been afforded to publications of special service. The British association appointed a committee, who reported in 1857, after which the undertaking was proposed to the Royal Society. The Royal Society made an appeal to her Majesty's government, and obtained the necessary stipend. Such was the inception of the Royal Society Catalogue of scientific papers of this century, in eight quarto volumes, as issued in 1867 and 1877. Seriously curtailed from the generous plan of the committee who proposed it, limited to the single feature of an index of authors, it is nevertheless of great help in literary search. Before any list of papers, however, we must place a list of the serials that contain them, as registered by an active member of this association, an instance of industry and critical judgment. I refer to the well-known catalogue of scientific and technical periodicals, of about five thousand numbers, in publication from 1665 to 1882, together with the catalogue of chemical periodicals by the same author.[1]

Compilations of Science.

Allied to the much-needed service in bibliography, is the service in compilation of the Constants of Nature. In the preface of his dictionary of solubilities, in 1856, Professor Storer said, "that chemical science itself might gain many advantages if all known facts regarding solubility were gathered from their widely-scattered original sources into one special comprehensive work." That the time for the philosophical study of solution was near at hand has been verified by recent extended monographs on this subject. In like manner, Thomas Carnelley in England, and early and repeatedly our own Professor Clarke in the United States,[2] bringing multitudes of scattered results into co-ordination, have augmented the powers of chemical service.

What bibliography does for research, the Handwörterbuch does for education, and for technology. It makes science wieldy to the student, the teacher, and the artisan. The chief dictionaries of science, those of encyclopedic scope, ought to be provided generally in public libraries, as well as in the libraries of all high schools.[3] The science classes in preparatory schools should make acquaintance with scientific literature in this form. If scholars be assigned exercises which compel reference reading, they will gain a beginning of that accomplishment too often neglected, even in college, how to use books.

The Laboratory Method.

The library is a necessity of the laboratory. Indeed, there is much in common between what is called the laboratory method, and what might be called the library method, in college training. The educational laboratory was instituted by chemistry, first taking form under Liebig at Giessen only about fifty years ago. Experimental study has been adopted in one subject after another, until now the "laboratory method" is advocated in language and literature, in philosophy and law. It is to be hoped that chemistry will not fall behind in the later applications of "the new education" in which she took so early a part.

Urgency of the Chemical Task.

The advancement of chemical science is not confined to discovery, nor to education, nor to economic use. All of those interests it should embrace. To disparage one of them is injurious to the others. Indeed, they ought to have equal support. It

[1] Bolton's Catalogue of Scientific and Technical Periodicals (1885: Smithsonian) omits the serials of the societies, as these are the subject of Scudder's Catalogue of Scientific Serials (1879: Harvard Univ.). On the contrary, Bolton's Catalogue of Chemical Periodicals (1885: N. Y. Acad. Sci.) includes the publications of societies as well as other serials. Chemical technology is also represented in the last-named work.

[2] The service of compilation of this character is again indicated by this extract from Clarke's introduction to the first edition of his "Constants" (1873): "While engaged upon the study of some interesting points in theoretical chemistry, the compiler of the following tables had occasion to make frequent reference to the then existing lists of specific gravities. None of these, however, were complete enough. . . ."

[3] The statistics of school libraries in the United States are very meagre, the expenditures for them being included with that for apparatus. For libraries and apparatus of all common schools, both primary and secondary, the annual expenditure is set at $987,048, which is about seven-tenths of one per cent of the total expenditure for these schools.

would be idle to inquire into their respective advantages. This much, however, is evident enough, chemical work is extensive, and there is immediate want of it.

Various other branches of science are held back by the delay of chemistry. Many of the material resources of the world wait upon its progress. In the century just before us the demands upon the chemist are to be much greater than they have been. All the interests of life are calling for better chemical information. Men are wanting the truth. The biologist on the one hand, and the geologist on the other, are shaming us with interrogatories that ought to be answered. Philosophy lingers for the results of molecular inquiry. Moreover the people are asking direct questions about the food they are to eat, or not to eat, asking more in a day than the analyst is able to answer in a month. The nutritive sources of bodily power are not safe, in the midst of the reckless activity of commerce, unless a chemical safeguard be kept, a guard who must the better prepare himself for his duty.

The Subsistence of Science.

Now if the people at large can but gain a more true estimation of the bearing of chemical knowledge, and of the extent of the chemical undertaking, they will more liberally supply the sinews of thorough-going toil. It must be more widely understood that achievements of science, such as have already multiplied the hands of industry, do not come by chances of invention, nor by surprises of genius. It must be learned of these things that they come by breadth of study, by patience in experiment, and by the slow accumulations of numberless workers. And it must be made to appear that the downright labor of science actually depends upon means of daily subsistence. It must be brought home to men of affairs, that laboratories of seclusion with delicate apparatus, that libraries such as bring all workers together in effect, that these really cost something in the same dollars by which the products of industrial science are measured. Statistics of chemical industry are often used to give point to the claims of science. For instance, it can be said that this country, not making enough chemical wood-pulp, has paid over a million dollars a year for its importation; that Great Britain pays twelve million dollars a year for artificial fertilizers from without; that coal tar is no longer counted a by-product, having risen in its value to a par with coal gas. But these instances, as striking as numerous others, still tend to divert attention from the more general service of chemistry as it should be known in all the economies of civilization.

It is not for me to say what supplies are wanted for the work of chemists. These wants are stated, in quite definite terms, by a sufficient number of those who can speak for themselves. But if my voice could reach those who hold the supplies, I would plead a most considerate hearing of all chemical requisitions, and that a strong and generous policy may in all cases prevail in their behalf.

The Lesson of a Life.

If any event of the year is able to compel the attention of the world to the interests of research, it must be the notable close of that life of fifty years of enlarged chemical labor, announced from Berlin a few months ago. When thirty years of age, August Wilhelm von Hofmann, a native of Giessen and a pupil of Liebig, was called to work in London. Taking hold of the organic derivatives of ammonia, and presently adopting the new discoveries of Wurtz, he began those masterly contributions that appear to have been so many distinct steps toward a chemistry of nitrogen, such as manufacture and agriculture and medicine have thriven upon. In 1850 he opened a memoir in the Philosophical Transactions with these words, "the light now begins to dawn upon the chaos of collected facts." Since that time the coal-tar industry has risen and matured, medicine has learned to measure the treatment of disease, and agriculture to estimate the fertility of the earth. It seems impossible that so late as March of the present year, he was still sending his papers to the journals. If we could say something of what he has done, words would fail to say what he has caused others to do. And yet, let it be heard in these United States, without such a generous policy of expenditure for science as gave to Dr. Hofmann his training in Giessen, or brought him to London in 1848, or built for him laboratories in Bonn and Berlin, without such provision by the State, the fruits of his service would have been lost to the world. Aye, and for want of a like broad and prudent provision for research with higher education, in this country, other men of great love for science and great power of investigation every year fail of their rightful career for the service of mankind.

Endowments for Research.

For the prosecution of research, in the larger questions now before us, no training within the limitations of human life can be too broad or too deep. No provision of revenue, so far as of real use to science, can be too liberal. The truest investigation is the most prudent expenditure that can be made.

In respect to the support that is wanted for work in science, I have reason for speaking with confidence. If I go beyond the subject with which I began I do not go beyond the warrant of the association. This body has lately defined what its members may say, by creating a committee to receive endowments for the support of research.

There are men and women who have been so far rewarded, that great means of progress are in their hands, to be vigorously held for the best advantage. Strength is required to use large means, as well as to accumulate them. It is inevitable to wealth, that it shall be put to some sort of use, for without investment it dies. By scattered investment wealth loses personal force. The American association, in the conservative interests of learning, proposes certain effective investments in science. If it be not given to every plodding worker to be a promoter of discovery, such at all events is the privilege of wealth, under the authority of this association. If it be not the good fortune of every investigator to reach knowledge that is new, there are, every year, in every section of this body, workers of whom it is clear that they would reach some discovery of merit, if only the means of work could be granted them. Whosoever supplies the means fairly deserves and will receive a share in the results. It is quite with justice that the name of Elizabeth Thompson, the first of the patrons, has been associated with some twenty-one modest determinations of merit recognized by this association.

The Association as a Trustee.

"To procure for the labors of scientific men increased facilities" is one of the constitutional objects of this body. It is time for effectiveness towards this object. The association has established its character for sound judgment, for good working organization, and for representative public interest. It has earned its responsibility as the American trustee of undertakings in science.

"To give a stronger . . . impulse . . . to scientific research" is another declaration of what we ought to do. To this end larger endowments are necessary. And it will be strange if some clear-seeing man or woman does not put ten thousand dollars, or some multiple of it, into the charge of this body for some searching experimental inquiry now waiting for the material aid. The committee upon endowment is ready for consultation upon all required details.

"To give . . . more systematic direction to scientific research" is likewise stated as one of our objects. To this intent the organization of sections affords opportunities not surpassed. The discussions upon scientific papers give rise to a concord of competent opinions as to the direction of immediate work. And arrangements providing in advance for the discussion of vital questions, as formally moved at the last meeting, will in one way or another point out to suitable persons such lines of labor as will indeed give systematic direction to research.

In Fellowship.

In conclusion I may mention another, the most happy of the duties of the American association. It is to give the hand of hospitable fellowship to the several societies which year by year gather with us upon the same ground. Comrades in labor and in refreshment, their efforts reinforce us, their faces brighten our way. May they join us more and more in the companionship

that sweetens the severity of art. A meeting of good workers is a remembrance of pleasure, giving its zest to the aims of the year.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE WEATHER SERVICES.

A CONVENTION of representatives of State weather services was held in Rochester, N.Y., on Aug. 15 and 16, 1892, in conjunction with the forty-third meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The convention was called to order by Professor Mark W. Harrington, chief of the Weather Bureau, who made an address of welcome to the representatives present. He suggested certain important subjects for discussion, and appointed committees on permanent organization, programme, etc.

A permanent organization was effected, and the following officers were elected: President, Major H. H. C. Dunwoody; first vice-president, B. S. Pague of Oregon; second vice-president, G. M. Chappel of Iowa; secretary, R. E. Kerkam, chief of State Weather Service Division, Weather Bureau; and treasurer, W. L. Moore of Wisconson.

The title, American Association of State Weather Services, was adopted by the convention, and it was decided to hold annual conventions in future at the same time and place as those of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The following representatives were in attendance: The U. S. Department of Agriculture, Weather Bureau, being represented by Professor Mark W. Harrington, chief; Major H. H. C. Dunwoody, forecast official; Mr. R. E. Kerkam, chief of State Weather Service Division; Mr. N. B. Conger, inspector; and Mr. F. J. Randolph, stenographer; F. H. Clarke, Arkansas; J. A. Barwick, California; John Craig, Illinois; C. F. R. Wappenhans, Indiana; G. M. Chappel, Iowa; Frank Burke, Kentucky; E. A. Evans, Michigan; G. A. Lovelend, Nebraska; J. Warren Smith, New England; E. W. McGann, New Jersey; R. M. Hardinge and W. O. Kerr, New York; C. M. Strong, Ohio; B. S. Pague, Oregon; H. L. Ball, Pennsylvania; S. W. Glenn, South Dakota; G. N. Salisbury, Utah; J. N. Ryker, Virginia; and W. L. Moore, Wisconsin.

Many of the representatives who were unable to be present at the convention forwarded papers giving their views on various subjects of interest to be discussed.

The subject of instrument-shelters and a uniform manner of their exposure was debated, and it was the concensus of opinion that a uniform pattern of shelter should be adopted for use throughout the entire country. The subject was referred to a committee consisting of Messrs Smith, Moore, and Pague, with instructions to report as to the most suitable shelter and manner of exposure to be generally adopted by State weather services.

On the subject of whether the voluntary observers should be supplied with self-registering maximum and minimum thermometers, the prevailing opinion was that such instruments should be issued and used in determining temperature means and averages, wherever and whenever practicable. The old method of making readings at 7 A.M., 2 P.M., and 9 P.M. of the dry thermometer shall be continued whenever desired, but the means should be deduced from the self-registering thermometers where such instruments are in use.

As to the adoption of a form to cover the needs of a great majority of the voluntary observers who are supplied with dry or maximum and minimum thermometers and rain-gauges, it was decided to adopt a form which was suggested by the secretary, so arranged as to admit of making three or four copies, at one writing, by means of the indelible carbon process, thus saving the observers the copying of the form at the end of the month; the object of this arrangement being to give a copy of the monthly report to the office of the chief of the Weather Bureau, one to the office of the director of the State service, and one to be retained by the observer, and also to make such additional copies as he may desire to furnish to the local press, etc.

The forecasting of thunder-storms was the fourth subject discussed, and an interesting paper on this topic was read by the Wisconsin representative.

The proposition to print the weekly, monthly, and annual reports of the State weather services in a uniform manner was freely discussed. The desirability of uniform reports was generally admitted, but it was thought impracticable at this time to take any action in the matter, as a number of States have appropriated funds for printing reports according to definite size and style.

The discussion of the question of the best methods of signaling weather forecasts by display-men covered a wide range. The flag, the whistle, the semaphore, and the sphere, bomb, and flash-light systems were freely discussed, and an interesting paper was presented by the New England representative on the system of spherical bodies hoisted on a staff. This subject was referred to a committee composed of Messrs. Conger, Glenn, and Kerkam, for report at the earliest practicable date.

On the subject of inspection of voluntary observers' stations the decision was that each voluntary station should be inspected at least once each year, to keep up the interest of the voluntary observers and to enable the directors of State services to become thoroughly familiar with each station and its surroundings. It was recommended by the association that sufficient leave of absence be granted the Weather Bureau representative at each State service centre to enable him to make a tour of inspection.

Relative to the subject — the relations of State weather services to agricultural colleges and experiment stations — it was decided that, owing to the lack of telegraphic facilities and other means of disseminating weather information, it would not be practicable generally to have the central stations of the State weather services at such colleges or stations, but that a very close co-operation would be desirable.

The subject of an exhibit at the World's Fair was the last general subject discussed. It was decided that each State service should have its exhibit in the building set apart for the use of the State, and not to have the exhibits collected in the building for the use of the United States Weather Bureau.

Mr. E. T. Turner of New York and Mr. E. H. Nimmo of Michigan were elected to active membership in the association, and the following honorary members were also elected: E. F. Smith, California; Professor R. Ellsworth Call, Iowa; Charles C. Nauck, Arkansas; Professor William H. Niles, Massachusetts; G. H. Whitcher, New England; H. G. Reynolds, Michigan; H. F. Alciatore, Oregon; Major Richard V. Gaines, Virginia; Professor A. L. McRae, Missouri; C. F. Schneider, Michigan; Professor Louis McLouth, South Dakota; and all active voluntary observers of the United States Weather Bureau.

NOTES AND NEWS.

MR. THEODOR GRAF of Vienna has in his possession a remarkable treasure in the shape of fragments of the Bible recently found in Egypt. They consist of a portion of Zechariah, chapters iv -xiv., in the shape of a papyrus book in a fair state of preservation. The fragment is that of a Greek translation, and from the shape of the letters the MS. would appear to belong to the fourth century, making it the oldest Bible MS. thus far discovered. The same papyrus also contains fragments of Malachi.

— The current number of the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* contains an article of the highest importance by the distinguished Egyptologist, Dr. Adolf Erman. He discusses in a most cautious way the supposed relationship of the Egyptian with the Semitic languages. A careful examination of the consonants and vowels, the accent, the pronominal suffixes, the pronouns, and the demonstratives, the nouns, adjectives, numerals, and verbs, as well as of the syntax, leads to the conclusion that on the grammatical side there is sufficient evidence to warrant the assertion of a relationship between Egyptian and Semitic. An examination of the vocabularies shows only a comparatively small number of words which are identical, but this number will probably be increased when the laws of phonetic change come to be better understood. The conclusions of Professor Erman, if accepted, will be epoch-making, since they will establish the identity of the culture of the Nile and Mesopotamian valleys.